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Standards of accommodation for air travel

Report of the Secretary-General*

I. Introduction

1. The present report, covering the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001, is submitted in accordance with General Assembly decisions 44/442 of 21 December 1989 and 46/450 of 20 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit annual reports on standards of accommodation for air travel. As also requested by the Assembly in its decision 40/455 of 18 December 1985 and section XIII of its resolution 45/248 A of 21 December 1990, information is included on expenditures by the United Nations for first-class air travel and relevant exceptions.

2. During the period under review, standards of accommodation for air travel were governed by General Assembly resolution 42/214 of 21 December 1987, in which the Assembly decided that all individuals, with the exception of the Secretary-General and the heads of delegations of the least developed countries to the regular and special sessions of the Assembly, whose travel was financed by United Nations organizations and programmes and who had been previously entitled to first-class accommodation, would be required to travel at the class immediately below first class. In the same resolution, the Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to exercise his discretion in making exceptions to allow first-class travel on a case-by-case basis.

II. Delegation travel

3. The General Assembly, in its resolution 42/214, limited the payment of first-class accommodation by air to one representative of each Member State designated as a least developed country attending the regular and special sessions of the Assembly. For the fifty-fifth session, for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001, claims submitted to date involved 27 such journeys at a cost of $160,867.

III. Exceptions authorized by the Secretary-General

4. As stated above, in General Assembly resolution 42/214, the Secretary-General was authorized to exercise his discretion in making exceptions to allow first-class air travel on a case-by-case basis. In addition, business-class travel by air may be authorized by the Secretary-General in certain circumstances, in accordance with administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/20 of 22 December 2000.

* Regarding the request contained in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 54/248 C, it should be noted that this report could not be submitted by the deadline owing to the need to receive information from various departments and offices pertaining to the travel year ended 30 June 2001.

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5. Generally, in reviewing cases that may warrant an exception, the Secretary-General takes into consideration the following circumstances:

(a) A medical condition may exist necessitating a level of comfort not available in the normal standard of accommodation to which the traveller is entitled. Such cases are referred to the Director of the Medical Services Division of the Secretariat for recommendation. It should be noted that the practice of granting exceptions in cases where a traveller is of an advanced age has been discontinued;

(b) The normal standard of accommodation is not available and, owing to the exigencies of the service, the traveller is required to travel on a particular date. Cases also arise where accommodation at the normal entitlement is not available and the cost of daily subsistence allowance, while waiting for the next available seat, would be greater than the higher standard of travel;

(c) The traveller is considered an eminent person, such as a former head of State, or a prominent figure in political, humanitarian or cultural areas;

(d) The traveller is a prominent person who is donating his or her services free of charge to the Organization, and, in some cases, at a loss of personal income. Such individuals may be accorded the standard of accommodation that they normally use when travelling;

(e) The traveller, after completing a full day of work, is required to travel through the night in order to resume work, attend meetings or present a paper at another location on the following morning or immediately upon arrival. Where such cases involve arduous journeys, it has been deemed reasonable that the standard of accommodation accorded to the traveller should provide the best rest possible while travelling, or provide the conditions most conducive to work while flying, or both.

6. In respect of exceptions to air travel authorized during the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001 owing to the circumstances described in paragraph 5 above, the present report provides, in annexes I to V, detailed information on the additional cost of and reasons for such exceptions.

7. On 18 March 1998, the Secretary-General decided, as an exception, that all travel of the Deputy Secretary-General should be in first class, in keeping with her special status. As regards practical arrangements, efforts first are made to obtain upgrades to first class against payment of the full business-class fare. Where this is not feasible, the first-class fare is paid. During the reporting period, two such journeys were carried out at a total additional cost of $3,211. Details of such travel are provided in annex VI to this report.

8. To strengthen the ability of the President of the General Assembly to effectively and efficiently discharge the responsibilities of his Office, the Assembly, by its resolution 53/214, decided that the President, consistent with the approved programme budget, should have full authority to use the funds provided for the Office. Based on that authority, the President of the fifty-fourth session of the Assembly undertook travel in first class. During the reporting period, one such journey was carried out at a total additional cost of $4,300. Details of such travel are provided in annex VII to this report.

9. Altogether, for travel during the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001, the Secretary-General exercised his discretion by authorizing, as an exception, 37 cases of first-class air travel. In addition, during the same period, the Secretary-General authorized business-class travel by air as an exception to the standards of accommodation in 30 cases.

10. It should be noted that, in accordance with the established practice to ensure personal safety, the Secretary-General was accompanied on all trips during the period under review by a personal aide/security officer who travelled by air in first class. The total additional cost of 11 such trips was $37,559.

11. While continuous administrative oversight has kept the number of exceptions at a minimum, it should be noted that in certain cases they are unavoidable. For example, exceptions owing to the lack of availability of regular standards are dictated by the exigencies of specific situations and their number cannot therefore be kept constant or be forced to decrease without hampering the efficiency of the traveller's missions. Moreover, in many cases, to compel a traveller to wait until the established standard of travel becomes available would result in extra cost to the Organization for the daily subsistence allowance over and above the cost of an upgrade; an upgrade therefore remains the only cost-effective option.

12. In the context of monitoring adherence to the standards of accommodation for air travel, cases were identified in which air travel was undertaken at a standard of accommodation higher than normal entitlement, for which no exception had been sought. In such cases, subsequent ex post facto approval was sought for an exception to the standards of accommodation. The details of such ex post facto exceptions authorized by the Secretary-General for the previous reporting period are outlined in annex VIII to this report.

Table 1
Summary of exceptions, 1 July 2000-30 June 2001
(Cost in United States dollars)

	First class		*Business class*		*Total*	
Reasons for exceptions	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*
Medical condition	5	8 707	12	18 381	17	27 088
Regular standard of accommodation not available	3	336	5	818	8	1 154
Eminent persons	8	11 980	12	23 802	20	35 782
Donating services free of charge to the Organization	7	15 705	0	0	7	15 705
Arduous journeys	0	0	1	292	1	292
Personal aides/security officer	11	37 559	0	0	11	37 559
Deputy Secretary-General	2	3 211	0	0	2	3 211
President of the General Assembly	1	4 300	0	0	1	4 300
Total	**37**	**81 798**	**30**	**43 293**	**67**	**125 091**

Table 2
Summary of exceptions, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000*
(Cost in United States dollars)

	First class		*Business class*		*Total*	
Reasons for exceptions	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*	*Number of trips*	*Additional cost*
Medical condition	5	6 119	2	1 973	7	8 092
Regular standard of accommodation not available	7	1 886	6	1 284	13	3 170
Eminent persons	2	4 628	8	10 503	10	15 131
Donating services free of charge to the Organization	2	2 824	8	8 914	10	11 738
Arduous journeys	0	0	7	3 634	7	3 634
Personal aides/security officer	13	55 662	0	0	13	55 662
Deputy Secretary-General	10	26 783	0	0	10	26 783
President of the General Assembly	8	30 561	0	0	8	30 561
Total	**47**	**128 463**	**31**	**26 308**	**78**	**154 771**

* Adjusted for ex post facto authorizations that related to the previous reporting period but were not included in the previous report (A/55/488).

Annex I

Exceptions authorized owing to medical conditions, 1 July 2000-30 June 2001

	Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*	*Additional cost (US dollars)*
A.	**First class**		
1.	Prosecutor, International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia	The Hague/Washington, D.C./New York/The Hague	2 411
2.	Prosecutor, International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia	The Hague/Washington, D.C./Dayton/New York/The Hague	2 123
3.	Prosecutor, International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia	The Hague/Washington, D.C./New York/The Hague	1 325
4.	Executive Chairman, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission	New York/Tokyo/Beijing/Tokyo/Singapore/Kuala Lumpur/Bangkok/Bahrain/London/New York	1 400
5.	Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme	Frankfurt/Tokyo	1 448
	Subtotal		**8 707**
B.	**Business class**		
1.	Staff member, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	New York/Geneva	1 073
2.	Staff member, United Nations Mine Action Service, Department of Peacekeeping Operations	Geneva/New York	339
3.	Staff member, Economic Commission for Europe	Geneva/New York/Geneva	339
4.	Consultant, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	London/Cairo/London	1 508
5.	Staff member, Department of Economic and Social Affairs	New York/Geneva/New York	804
6.	Participant, preparatory meetings for Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries	New York/Geneva/New York	3 751
7.	Staff member, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Geneva/Moscow/Geneva	245
8.	Staff member, UNHCR	Geneva/Amman/Geneva	659
9.	Senior Consultant, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	London/New York/London	4 116
10.	Peacekeeper, United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor	Darwin/Lisbon	669
11.	Consultant, UNDP	London/Dakar/Accra/New York/London	2 093
12.	Consultant, UNDP	Boston/Geneva/Boston	2 785
	Subtotal		**18 381**
	Total		**27 088**

Annex II

Exceptions authorized when the regular standard of accommodation was not available, 1 July 2000-30 June 2001

	Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (US dollars)*
A.	**First class**		
1.	Staff member, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	.../Tunis/Amman/...	128
2.	Staff member, Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Antigua/Jamaica/Antigua	104
3.	Staff member, Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Antigua/Jamaica/Antigua	104
	Subtotal		**336**
B.	**Business class**		
1.	Staff member, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	Bangkok/Paro/...	67
2.	Staff member, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	.../Buenos Aires/Santiago	211
3.	Staff member, UNDP	New York/Abidjan/Brazzaville/...	400
4.	Deputy Minister of Trade and Economy, Tajikistan	Dushanbe/Moscow/...	70
5.	Senior official, Ministry of Trade and Economy, Tajikistan	Dushanbe/Moscow/...	70
	Subtotal		**818**
	Total		**1 154**

[a] The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by the regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

Annex III

Exceptions authorized for eminent persons, 1 July 2000-30 June 2001

	Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (US dollars)*
A.	**First class**		
	Meeting of the Inter-Action Council of former heads of government: High-level Expert Group Meeting on Pluralism and Global Governance		
1.	Former President of Costa Rica	San Jose/Boston/San Jose	89
2.	Former Prime Minister of Jordan	Amman/Boston/Amman	1 942
	Meeting of the Inter-Action Council of former heads of government: High-level Expert Group Meeting on East Asia and the Pacific in the twenty-first century: Geopolitical and Economic Dimensions		
3.	Former President of Indonesia	.../Frankfurt/Seoul/Frankfurt/...	3 532
4.	Former Prime Minister of Australia	Melbourne/Singapore/Seoul/Singapore/ Melbourne	974
	Panel of Eminent Persons on Financing for Development		
5.	Former President of Mexico	Mexico City/New York/Mexico City	858
6.	Former President of Mexico	Mexico City/New York/Mexico City	1 272
7.	Former President of Mexico	Mexico City/New York/Mexico City	1 506
	Security Council meeting on the Burundi peace process		
8.	Former President of South Africa	Johannesburg/New York/Johannesburg	1 807
	Subtotal		**11 980**
B.	**Business class**		
	Interview with the Secretary-General		
1.	Former Prime Minister, Côte d'Ivoire	Paris/New York/Paris	2 842
	International media encounter on the question of Palestine		
2.	Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations	New York/Paris/New York	4 596
3.	Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations and Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	New York/Paris/New York	4 596
4.	Minister for Planning and International Cooperation for the Palestinian Authority	Amman/Paris/Amman	282
5.	Former Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations	Washington, D.C./Paris/Washington, D.C.	4 229
6.	Former Director of Near-East Affairs, National Security Council of the United States of America	Washington, D.C./Paris/Washington, D.C.	4 229
	Regional round table for Africa in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development		
7.	Former Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania	Dar-es-Salaam/Cairo/Dar-es-Salaam	310
8.	Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization	Geneva/Cairo/Geneva	33

	Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (US dollars)*
	Regional round table for Latin America and the Caribbean in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development		
9.	Former President of Panama	New York/Barbados/New York	806
	Meetings in connection with the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Mission in Kosovo		
10.	Defence Minister of Denmark	Copenhagen/New York/Copenhagen	817
	African Development Forum		
11.	Former President of Zambia	London/Addis Ababa/London	582
12.	Former First Lady of South Africa	Johannesburg/Addis Ababa/Johannesburg	480
	Subtotal		**23 802**
	Total		**35 782**

[a] The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by the regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

Annex IV

Exceptions authorized for prominent persons donating their services free of charge to the Organization, 1 July 2000-30 June 2001

	Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*	*Additional cost (US dollars)*
A.	**First class**		
	Consultations on Western Sahara		
1.	Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara	Berlin/Houston	2 298
2.	Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara	Houston/New York/Houston	1 361
	Campaign against HIV/AIDS		
3.	Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	New York/London/Johannesburg/London/New York	1 859
4.	Spouse of UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador	New York/London/Johannesburg/London/New York	1 859
	Public awareness and fund-raising activities for the United Nations Children's Fund		
5.	UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador	Nice/Frankfurt/Jakarta/Denpasar/Tokyo/Los Angeles/Nice	2 614
6.	UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador	Nice/Frankfurt/Jakarta/Denpasar/Tokyo/Los Angeles/Nice	2 624
	Public awareness activities for UNICEF's work in early childhood development		
7.	UNICEF Special Representative	New York/London/Nairobi/London/New York	3 100
	Subtotal		**15 705**
B.	**Business class**		
	None		–
	Subtotal		–
	Total		**15 705**

Annex V

Exceptions authorized for cases involving arduous journey, 1 July 2000-30 June 2001

	Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*	*Additional cost (US dollars)*
A.	**First class**		
	None		–
	Subtotal		–
B.	**Business class**		
1.	Staff member, United Nations Development Programme	Copenhagen/New York/Copenhagen	292
	Subtotal		**292**
	Total		**292**

Annex VI

Exceptions relating to the travel of the Deputy Secretary-General, 1 July 2000-30 June 2001

Designation of traveller		*Itinerary*	*Additional cost (US dollars)*
A.	**First class**		
1.	Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Stockholm/New York	1 544
2.	Deputy Secretary-General	New York/Petra/New York	1 667
	Total		**3 211**

Annex VII

Exceptions relating to the travel of the President of the General Assembly, 1 July 2000-30 June 2001

Designation of traveller		*Itinerary*	*Additional cost (US dollars)*
A.	**First class**		
1.	President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly	New York/Windhoek/New Delhi/Paris/Algiers/Tunis/Djerba/Tripoli/Rome/New York	4 300
	Total		**4 300**

Annex VIII

Exceptions relating to the previous reporting period, 1 July 1999-30 June 2000

	Designation of traveller	*Itinerary*[a]	*Additional cost (US dollars)*
A.	**First class**		
	Regular standard of accommodation not available		
1.	Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	... Geneva/Algiers	124
	Subtotal		**124**
B.	**Business class**		
	Arduous journey		
1.	Staff members, UNDP	... Geneva/New York	1 418
	Subtotal		**1 418**
	Total		**1 542**

[a] The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by the regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.